

Boys' Boarding School Trains for Leadership

Patience, Breadth and Poise Cultivated Through
Student Government, Results in Greater Steadiness,
Manliness and Sounder Moral Tone.

By the late T. QUINCY BROWNE, Jr.,

IN the Schoolmasters' Association of New York and in other places where teachers and heads of schools gather the question of training for leadership not infrequently comes up. Before undertaking a consideration of this subject as it applies to us to-day it might be well to look back a little and see what system of education has produced the greatest number of good leaders. For the purpose of this discussion let us eliminate the Latin countries, where the autocratic tradition of government, for their problems and their aims are distinctly different. Of the countries left England presents the best field for inquiry. In the conduct of their affairs, in many institutions the councils or committees have only advisory powers. This is the first step, however, and serves to gain the interest of the students. Yet little that is vital is accomplished until some executive responsibility is assumed. Where officials are elected instead of appointed more is gained, because the thought, interest and self-activity of the rank and file, as well as of the leaders, are enlisted. The old adage "If you wish to get men to obey" might be modified in this case to read: "In order to lead effectively one must first learn to follow intelligently." The American plan has the ad-

To what does Emdin owe her Nelsons and her Wellingtons? Not, surely, to her college training, but to the training of her so-called "public schools." A glance at the great names on the rolls of Eton, Harrow, Westminster and Rugby wars, value testing this assertion. It may be objected that these schools draw their members from the aristocracy. In the main this is true, but a privileged class, more than any other, needs the most drastic kind of training to "knock out" of the pampered boy his notions of ease and privilege and to make him an effective human machine. The system of these public schools of England is especially adapted to achieve this result. For a number of reasons, it is well worth our study.

The first thing that strikes one is that the system is mainly competitive; boy is pitted against boy, even in his studies. In order to gain promotion he is required not merely to reach the passing grade but to outrank a certain proportion of the members of his form. For example, in a class of fifteen it might be decided that only the first ten should be promoted. The distinctive feature of the system is that the boys in the upper part of the school are largely responsible for the tone of the school and the discipline of the scholars. This places the regulation of community life largely in the hands of the boys themselves, and there is no other means so effective for developing a sense of responsibility, an understanding of community life and a power of leadership.

Our own country, by a democracy. It is of course better to have the democratic form of boy rule, election, instead of appointment by the headmaster or the automatic system of the English, which is virtually a survival of the fittest scholastically. Such democratic systems have been tried in American schools in a number of different forms and have been very successful where they have been.

With tact and firmness and with the help of the rulers is different in kind from the best training for subjects; theoretically, the one should be taught to command to the other to follow. The training for the one is not to be given blindly. In the training for the other, the training for leadership and for citizenship may better be the same, for the leaders are apt to be chosen from the people and a perfect understanding between boy and master is still strong. The old tradition once established and the new education is to be given for citizenship and leadership alike, and

the most difficult part of the task. The opinion has been solved, for the working out of governmental details then becomes a matter of natural growth. The form of organization should be devised to suit the type of school; a small school naturally needs merely a committee or some simple form of government, whereas the great public schools, with hundreds or even thousands of boys and girls evidently find the school city or state plan more satisfactory. Probably here it provides a sufficient number of officers to stimulate interest and furnishes an incentive to patriotism in the large foreign element which knows so little of our institutions and therefore needs this ocular demonstration of our form of government.

To return for a moment to the English system. The best evidence of its effectiveness seems to me to lie in the fact that England in the past has been able to send her sons to the extremities of the earth, to all kinds of all, into tropical climates, such as India, with the assurance that her Judges and officials would retain their high sense of justice and their Anglo-Saxon character, no matter where located or how isolated. The support of an Anglo-Saxon community is

his quality among others that has made the English, up to the present time, the most successful colonizers. The trait is due largely to the fact, I believe, that the emphasis in their secondary schools has been placed upon character building rather than upon intellectual acquirement. There has been also a mixture of the old ideals of Locke to the effect that to succeed in the world a man must train his body and his mind to endure strain and hardship. A democracy, even more than a monarchy, has need of such training and we with our present tendency toward making the school a place of idling may be in danger of departing too far from those stern and practical ideals.

Under our form of government, citizens and leaders alike have especial need of patience, breadth and poise. This can only come from an insight into the communal life born of actual experience. But this insight can hardly be gained after leaving a good college, because things in the outer world are on too large a scale. Within the school circle, where issues are not so much of monetary considerations, but simply of honor and respect, the

dicting interests, the fundamental principles of social and political education must be well acquired. In our communities, everything is conducted on a gigantic scale and, consequently, all that most of us know of public affairs is gleaned from the papers whose versions often contradict each other.

In the New England States, the

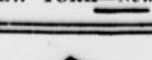
forefathers the town meeting made it possible for every patriotic citizen to gain his political experience within a compass sufficiently restricted to be intelligible. But those days have passed and the city has produced them and we must now seek to substitute. The most obvious one is the school. Already more than one hundred and fifty high schools, a few colleges and eighty-three colleges, accumulating the self-government committee of New York City has produced some form of pupil cooperation

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

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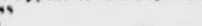
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